

In-Home Supportive Services Information Booklet

What is IHSS?

The In-Home Supportive Services program (IHSS) allows limited income elderly, blind, or disabled people to hire someone to help them with housework, meal preparation, and personal care. With this help, the IHSS recipient may remain safely in their home and will not need to move into a care facility or an institution.

The IHSS program is funded by federal, state, and county resources. The IHSS recipient chooses their care provider, supervises the provider's work, defines how tasks will be done, and can fire the provider if necessary.

The IHSS program pays providers to provide *personal care*, such as feeding and bathing; *household tasks* such as laundry, shopping, meal preparation and light housecleaning; *transportation*; *protective supervision*; and certain *paramedical services* ordered by a physician.

IHSS does not pay for the following services:

- General gardening or yard clean-up that does not present a hazard
- Feeding, cleaning up after, or exercising a pet
- Moving/lifting heavy furniture, boxes, etc.
- Washing windows
- Transporting anyone but the IHSS recipient
- Paying bills

As the IHSS recipient, you can only ask your provider to perform those tasks that the IHSS caseworker has authorized. In addition, you should never ask your provider to work more than the maximum number of hours the caseworker has authorized.

Who is Eligible for IHSS?

An IHSS recipient must be a California resident (over age 65), disabled or blind, be unable to remain safely in his/her own home without assistance and meets one of the following conditions:

- Currently receives Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Program (SSI/SSP) benefits
- Meets all SSI/SSP eligibility criteria including income, but does not receive SSI/SSP benefits
- Meets all SSI/SSP eligibility criteria except his/her income exceeds SSI/SSP eligibility standards. In this case, the person pays a share of cost to receive IHSS services
- Has a chronic disabling condition expected to last at least a year or to result in death within a year and is eligible to receive Medi-Cal under a categorically needy program

In addition, disabled individuals who work may also be eligible for IHSS. For example, recipients that received SSI in the past, still suffer from the impairments on which their SSI was based, are ineligible for SSI because they are working, and need IHSS for personal care services. These recipients will pay a share of cost, but the cost is calculated in a way that provides an incentive to keep working.

How Do I Apply For IHSS?

You can discover if you are eligible for IHSS services by calling the Placer County Adult Intake number at (916) 787-8860 or toll free at (888) 886-5401. Ask to speak with an IHSS duty-worker who can help assess your IHSS eligibility. The duty-worker asks for some basic information to assess your need for services and your eligibility. You have the right to file a written application and receive a written determination within 30-45 days.

Why Do I Need Medi-Cal?

Your IHSS funding comes through the California Medi-Cal program. Placer County pays your IHSS provider directly, and then recovers that cost from the State Medi-Cal program.

- Call the Medi-Cal application phone line at (530) 880-7610, (916) 784-6000 or 1-888-385-5160. Then request a Medi-Cal application. You may also access the application on-line at the following web-site: http://www.benefitscalwin.org
- Mail or take your application with the required verifications (proof) to one of three Placer County locations:
 - ➤ The Auburn office located at 11519 B Avenue, Auburn, CA 95603 or call (530) 889-7610.
 - ➤ The Roseville office located at 1000 Sunset Blvd, Rocklin, CA 95765 or call (916) 784-6000.
 - ➤ The North Lake Tahoe office located at 5225 No. Lake Blvd, Carnelian Bay, CA 96140 or call (530) 546-1900.
- If you don't have all your verifications, or are not sure of what you need to submit, please send what you have gathered. You may send the rest later. The earlier we receive your application, the earlier your case will be processed and your Medi-Cal benefits can begin.
- If you get SSI/SSP payments, the Social Security administration office automatically establishes Medi-Cal for you. No separate application for Medi-Cal is needed. You should receive your Medi-Cal card (BIC) through the mail.

Note that once you've been approved for IHSS benefits, it is imperative that you maintain your Medi-Cal eligibility going forward, or you will also forfeit your IHSS services.

What is Medical Certification?

As of August 1, 2011, Health Certification, by a Licensed Health Care Provider, must be established. Your health care provider will need to certify that you are unable to independently perform one or more activities of daily living and to verify that one or more IHSS service is required in order to prevent out of home care. The certification document will be mailed to you in the IHSS application packet.

What Happens Next?

After your Medi-Cal and Medical Certification are established, a Placer County caseworker will come to your home and complete an assessment of your functional abilities. The caseworker uses a statewide uniform assessment process to determine which functions of daily living IHSS recipients are unable to perform on their own.

If eligibility is established, the caseworker authorizes the number of service hours per week for each of the tasks you have been determined to need. The caseworker mails you a "Notice of Action" detailing the decisions regarding your care. When you select a provider, inform them what tasks have been authorized for your care and the number of hours per week authorized to complete those tasks. Note that the IHSS program will not pay the provider for more than the authorized hours or for performing tasks not authorized by your caseworker.

How Do I Find an IHSS Provider?

You may select a family member, a friend, or advertise in the community-at-large for a provider. IHSS will pay spouses and parents of minor children to provide care under certain circumstances. Every IHSS case is evaluated separately, so the circumstances under which these services are granted vary greatly. You may select a provider from the Provider Registry maintained by the Placer County Public Authority at (530) 886-3680.

What does the Public Authority Do?

The Public Authority negotiates with the local homecare provider's union to set wages, benefits, and working conditions for IHSS providers. They offer the following services to IHSS recipients and providers:

- Maintain a homecare provider Registry that you can use to find a suitable provider
- Investigate the qualifications and background of individuals on the Registry
- Offer access to training for providers and recipients in various aspects of the IHSS program
- Help Registry providers and their clients work out difficulties in their relationship
- Provide staff support to the County's IHSS Advisory Committee, which works to improve the Public Authority and the IHSS program.

I'm Ready To Hire My Provider. What Should Happen Next?

Your provider should contact the Public Authority office to attend the next available Provider Orientation, because your provider must complete the following before being paid: attend a Provider Orientation meeting, complete a Department of Justice criminal background check and fingerprinting, and submit the required Provider Enrollment forms.

IHSS Recipient's Rights and Responsibilities

- 1. You are the employer for the purpose of screening, hiring, supervising, training and, if necessary, firing the provider.
- 2. You have the responsibility to abide by non-discrimination policies on the basis of race, religion, gender, age, and disability.
- 3. You are responsible for notifying the IHSS caseworker when you hire or fire a provider. If a Public Authority Registry provider is involved, you must also inform the Registry staff.

- 4. You must give your provider a two-week notice when terminating their employment unless your provider has been abusive.
- 5. You must keep a record of hours worked and limit the provider's hours to the number authorized per month.
- 6. You are responsible for verifying and signing the provider's timesheet.
- 7. You have the responsibility to be clear and reasonable about what is expected from your provider; to be consistent, fair, and patient, and to give praise as well as criticism.
- 8. Both you and the provider must notify your caseworker immediately if your provider is injured on the job.
- 9. You have the right to request a reassessment of hours if your condition changes.
- 10. You have the right to appeal any decision by the IHSS program with which you do not agree.
- 11. If you hire a Registry provider, you have the right to ask the Registry for assistance with problems you may have with the provider that you are unable to resolve.
- 12. If I obtain other health care coverage including Long Term Care Insurance, I will notify my IHSS caseworker.
- 13. If I receive any funding for any services also provided by the IHSS program, I will notify my IHSS caseworker.

What Other Services Are Available To Me As A Medi-Cal Recipient?

Mental health services are available to people with Medi-Cal, including children, young people, adults, and older adults residing in Placer County. Sometimes these services are available through your regular doctor; sometimes they are provided by a Mental Health specialist called a Network Provider. Some specialty mental health services include the following:

- Crisis counseling to help people who are having an emotional crisis
- Individual, group, or family therapy
- Prescriptions for medicines that help treat mental illness

The Placer County Managed Care Unit will facilitate your request for mental health services. If you believe you would benefit from specialty mental health services, call the Placer County Adult Intake Services number at (916) 787-8860 or toll free at (888) 886-5401 to initiate your referral to the Managed Care Unit.

In-Home Supportive Services 11512 B Avenue Auburn, CA 95603 Phone (916) 787-8860